

Austin, Samuel :

Religion the Glory of a Community

Election Day Sermon, 1816

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No 22.

Election Sermon.

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IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VERMONT, OCT. 11, 1846.

*Resolved that the thanks of this House be presented to the
Rev. SAMUEL AUSTIN, for his Election Sermon, and that he be
requested to furnish a copy for publication.*

W. D. SMITH, Clerk.

No 22.

RELIGION THE GLORY OF A COMMUNITY.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE DAY OF GENERAL

ELECTION,

AT MONTPELIER, OCTOBER 10, 1816,

BEFORE THE HONORABLE

LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT.

..... 1760-1830
BY SAMUEL AUSTIN, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT.
.....

MONTPELIER, Vt.

PRINTED BY WALTON AND GOSS, OCTOBER,

1816. •

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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AY

ELECTION SERMON.

ISAIAH lx. 19.

"THY GOD, THY GLORY."

THESE words are a part of a discourse in which the prophet presents a predictive description of the future prosperity of Israel, as a community. The foundation of this prosperity was to be laid in the universal influence of religion. The cause and the effect are concurrently displayed in the animated address which introduces, and is continued quite through, the chapter. The closing passages are these ; "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself ; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation ; I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time."

It is the true, in distinction from every false religion, whose diffusion and effects are here described. A sincere subjection to religion in the individual secures the unfailing covenant favor of God. And his favor is life. God is the

portion of the religious man. It is his glory to know, love, and serve him; to be like him in his views and affections, and to be under his protection. What is true of the religious individual must be true of a community, yielding itself to be governed in all things by the counsel of God; and the words relate more especially to a common religious character.— And the effects of religion, when it becomes a general character, as presented in the context, are common, and respect principally the present world.

The words then warrant and invite our attention to this position,

Religion, embraced in its principles, and obeyed in its precepts, is the proper glory of a community.

To illustrate and establish this position, it will seem requisite for me,

I. To shew, by a brief statement, what religion is.

II. That a real subjection to religion, comprehending the adoption of its principles and obedience to its precepts, is absolutely necessary to its producing its legitimate effect. And,

III. To point out the leading particulars, which constitute the true glory of a community, and which must be secured upon a universal subjection to religion.

I. We are to shew, by a brief statement, what religion is. Religion may be considered as a personal character. In that view it is moral rectitude. The man who should be entirely actuated by religion, as sinless spirits are in heaven, would be perfect as God is perfect. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are

of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," they are all comprehended in religion.

We have a perfect exemplification of religion, as a personal character, in Him, and in Him only, who is the light and the life of the world. In Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and, in temper and conversation, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." In him we see all conceivable moral excellence, without being obscured by weakness or enthusiasm, and unpolluted by policy and an over-weening attachment to ceremonies and forms.

Religion may be considered as a system, and it is in this light especially that we now speak of it. In this view it comprehends all truth and all righteousness. It is a dispensation of light, of law, and of grace. Religion regards the duty and the highest felicity of man. It respects all beings between whom and us there are moral relations, and every thing which we can employ to a useful end. It relates to the understanding, the heart, and the practice. It relates to the understanding, as it enriches it with knowledge, particularly the knowledge of God, his government and salvation, and our duty and highest interest. It relates to the heart, as it enjoins and produces right affections towards all objects of good will, of esteem, and of displeasure. It relates to practice, as it not only purifies the spring, but sanctifies the powers and the instruments of action; and extends its controul over the affections, and over the whole of a man's behavior. It prescribes a uniform course, according to that perfect law, which requires us to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. The love, which is its great practical principle, is not such in its nature as depraved men are actuated by, terminating in self; but is disinterested or impar-

tial. It is an authoritative law, giving to conscience its proper efficacy, effectually guarding against the commission of moral wrong, and impelling to the worship of God, and all works of charity towards men.

To estimate religion rightly, we must consider it in its simplicity; not in the fantastic attire with which many persons have thought they could adorn it; not spoiled with intermixtures; not as the Shibboleth of a sect; not as a mere subject of speculation and controversy; or an instrument which crafty statesmen can employ to accomplish their designs.—Many objections made to it would vanish in a moment, if the distinction were candidly made between what it is, and what it is injuriously made to be, by those who wish to shape it to their own humours.

Let us now consider,

II. The necessity that religion be embraced in its principles, and obeyed in its precepts, in order to its producing its legitimate effect. By principles I mean those truths, which, as they come to us by the testimony of God, are objects of faith. They may be otherways called doctrines, to a specification of which I have not time to descend. By precepts is meant the entire sacred code of the Bible; all the requirements, and all the prohibitions affecting us, which it contains. The principles and the precepts are inseparable. They mutually illustrate and establish each other. They have the same origin, advance their claims with the same authority, and are equally at agreement with goodness of heart. We are not excused from embracing the principles on the pretence that they are involved in mystery, and are subjects of alteration. There would be no dispute respecting them if all men were duly humble and teachable. They are dis-

strictly set before us, "and the meek will he guide in his way." We are not excused from obeying the precepts on the pretence of *their* strictness or *our* depravity. For "the commandment is holy, and just, and good." The principles must be embraced *cordially*; and it is impossible to obey the precepts, but in this way. If we embrace them, we accord with them in our belief, feelings, and practice. We possess the holiness they require. If we receive them not, they fail in their spiritual design, and their salutary influence is lost. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Religion cannot have its proper effect, if it merely float in our imagination, or hang upon us as a dead profession; if we substitute opinion for faith, and an imperfect exterior morality for strict obedience.

We will now turn our attention,

III. To the leading things in which the true glory of a community consists, and which, it is evident, must be effected, supposing religion to have a universal influence.

1. The universal influence of religion must extirpate and preclude all idolatry, and all utopian systems of philosophy, tending directly to the subversion of social order.

It is no small part of the glory of a community to be exempt from whatever is the debasement of nations, and contributes, by an irresistible fatality, to their overthrow. Mag-

kind have been, in all ages, addicted to idolatry, and it has sunk them into an extreme moral degradation. It has made them ignorant, ferocious, and cruel. Even the favored people of God were perpetually and strongly inclined to it. The greatest of their abominations were the idols they imported from the nations around them : and their frequent apostacies to idolatrous worship were the causes of the wasting judgments, which, in succession, fell upon them. Idolatry is a base usurpation of the rights and honors of Jehovah, and leads to the remorseless and unblushing perpetration of all manner of sin. It ever assimilates its votaries, in temper and practice, to the objects of its worship. Some of these are creatures of mere sentient and instinctive powers. Some of them the product of mechanical art, and presented to the eye of the beholder, in shapes, and by associations, directly adapted to excite vicious inclinations. Some of them, as the Moloch of ancient times, and the ghastly god of Jugernaut, in modern, are honored chiefly by human sacrifices. Some of them are patrons of fraud, lust, and rapine. In their number we find a God of war, a God of drunkenness, and a Goddess of licentious love. Even the Jupiter optimus maximus of the Greeks and Romans, was addicted to flagitious crimes. Hence the horrid scenes of sensuality and cruelty which are presented in the pages of history, and in nearly all countries. Idolatry is forbidden in the two first laws of the decalogue, and is reprobated throughout the scripture, as singularly offensive to God. True religion, consisting essentially in the knowledge, love, and worship of Jehovah, cannot have any agreement with this false worship, or with the crimes it generates. There is an eternal repugnance between them. It is the avowed object of the former to extirpate the latter ; and the latter is ever hostile and rigorous towards the former. They do not admit of society, at any time, or under any cir-

cumstance. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" If the former universally triumphs, the latter, with its train of evils, must be banished.

A philosophy, falsely so called, and but another name for that wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish, has coexisted with idolatry. It is wholly deceptive and ruinous. It has appeared recently in a combined and formidable effort to overturn Christianity, and to substitute in its place, the worship of Reason, or rather, to support an unqualified atheism. In this effort it has made an imposing display of talent, and learning. It has professed a strong attachment to civil liberty, and an universal philanthropy. But has produced just the opposite of its promises. It has spread usurpation and blood. Experiment has torn off its vizard, and exposed its malignity. Religion rescues and preserves from this philosophy, which, the more a man has of it, the more a victim of delusion he is. Instead of raising expectations but to disappoint them, religion begets a blessed hope, which is an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, entering to that within the veil. Instead of training up men to a singular adroitness in works of mischief, it makes them wise unto salvation. It would be a great point indeed, gained by a community, to be completely rid of this false philosophy, and to have those insurmountable barriers raised against its reentrance, which the universal prevalence of religion must form.

2. Religion, embraced by a community, as has been stated, would produce a very thorough, and most salutary reforma-

tion of morals. Moral disorders, may, and do often, prevail extensively, to the exposure of property, chastity and life, where infidelity is not acknowledged, and where a false philosophy is not known. Comparatively pure as *we* are, they are prevalent in our own country. They agitate neighborhoods, and sometimes convulse family society. They mislead, betray, impoverish, and destroy. Laws are enacted, courts are instituted, and moral societies are organized, to restrain these disorders. But they refuse to be checked.—The end is only partially gained. The Sabbath will continue to be broken; the name of God will be profaned: perjuries will find their way into tribunals of justice; chastity will be assaulted and sacrificed; frauds will be practiced; intemperance will be indulged. Health and property will be wasted upon vicious enjoyment. Religion is the effectually reforming principle. It lays the axe at the root of the tree. The individual who embraces it, becomes at once, and finally, more than moral. He puts on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. “And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.” As a visible reformation is ever co-extensive with the prevalence of religion, a universal spread of it, will certainly be accompanied with a universal and thorough reformation of the public morals. “Violence shall no more be heard in thee, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.”

3. Religion, universally embraced in its principles, and obeyed in its precepts, would exclude party collisions, and extend a grateful reciprocity of affection and kindness among all classes of the people.

Divide and conquer, was the maxim of Cæsar ; and it has been the practical maxim of all the Cæsars of the world. If party animosity can be spread among a people, they are easily dissipated and wasted. Their own hands will probably be employed in the work of self-destruction. Recollect the extinction of the Grecian States, following, by a terrible and inevitable consequence, their divisions. See Jerusalem sacked by the troops of Titus, and laid in ashes, as the effect of the intestine feuds of its inhabitants. Look at that mass of embodied war, the Roman Republic, and mark how it is perpetually convulsed, and at last subverted, by the contests of opposing parties and rival chiefs. Nor is it to be forgotten how a late revolution on the Continent of Europe, which promised much, at the outset, in behalf of humanity, has had an abortive issue, through the divisions which rent asunder its most forward promoters.

Party animosity is a Pandora's box. It scatters plagues of every description, and of fearful malignity. Is there no cure for this disease ? In my opinion there is but one ; and, blessed be God ! this is sovereign. In no case can recourse be had to it in vain. It is the balm of Gilead. And religion is this balm. Religion is the cement of minds. It converts embittered enemies into cordial friends. It retreats from the scene where injuries are done, and blood is shed, to the kinder office of binding up the wounds, which wrong has made. It is the principle of a true equality, not ambitious of distinction, nor envious of the honors which others receive ; holding office, and discharging its duties, merely for the public welfare. It inspires the magistrate with the feelings of an affectionate father, and the subject with a disposition to

yield a prompt obedience to law. It forgets sinister ends, and heeds not the buzz of party murmur, in the grand effort of doing right and promoting good. It sweetens the intercourse of neighborhoods, and in every thing is conciliating. Such was the affection which warmed thy heart, O Howard, philanthropist indeed, friend and benefactor of man, in whatever country he was found, or under whatever hue he appeared. Religion was the holy fire which expanded thy mind till it embraced all thy fellows, and stimulated thee to deeds of self-denial, which have made thee the admiration of all the wise and the good!

What is the Jerusalem of our God? It is a city which is compact together. What is it that brings it into this compact state? It is the attractive power of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. Let religion then be spread among all the members of a community, party collision will perish. The governors and the governed, will make one affectionate family; their union will be more and more perfected by the goodness they practice, and they will be perpetually cheered with the prospect of dwelling together forever in heaven.

4. Religion, embraced as has been stated, would banish ignorance, and facilitate the progress of useful knowledge. Knowledge is the proper aliment of mind. It is essential to moral action and felicity. It sets before men the end they should pursue, and the means; the objects which ought to attract their hearts, and the principles which ought to rule their conduct. It is to degradation that ignorance is destined. Respectability, usefulness and enjoyment are connected with knowledge. Religion has hardly received the honors that are due to it, for the influence it has had in banishing ignorance from the world, and increasing its stock of valua-

ble information. Christianity presents the only correct system of theology. And if we will trace the progress of science in its several branches, we shall find that it has flourished incomparably most, in christian countries and in christian schools.

Religion is friendly to the increase of knowledge, because it brings the possessor of it into the midst of its objects. It teaches him its value. It makes him give to mind its due superiority to matter. It makes him impartial in his enquiries, and industrious in his pursuits. It spurns indolence, and refuses to yield up the precious moments of life to self-indulgence. Was not the revival of letters cotemporaneous with that memorable event, which is commonly termed the Reformation? Do not the most valuable literary establishments of Europe owe their existence to the influence of Religion? And are not the most liberal and efficient promoters of true knowledge, now acting their parts on the theatre of life, to be found among the friends of Christianity? Then let religion pervade a community, ignorance will retire from it; facilities for the attainment of knowledge will be multiplied; and "knowledge and wisdom will be the stability of its times, and strength of salvation."

No country in the world has felt the benign influence of religion in this respect more than our own. The first fathers of New-England, were distinguished for their piety. And, to preserve, to spread, and to perpetuate, through succeeding generations, useful knowledge, was, with them, a primary object. In pursuit of this object, they founded and endowed colleges and schools. In consequence of which, knowledge is more diffused through this section of the country, than through any other portion of the globe. We do not pretend

to vie with Europe in philosophic and classical learning. Our opportunities and means, and indeed the excitements which most powerfully operate upon the human mind, as they exist with us, are not equal to theirs. But our progress has been honorable to us ; and every year adds something to our elevation. Religion has certainly had a primary influence in raising us to that measure of literary eminence to which we have arrived. Nor has this influence been inconsiderable upon this State. Its legislative fathers have not forgotten the interests of letters. Besides the provision they have made for instruction in schools and academies, they have consulted the progress of education in its higher walks. We assure ourselves that this most important interest will not be suffered to languish, since the conviction must remain, and be strengthened by daily proofs, that, as religion excites to the pursuit of knowledge, the advancement of knowledge is friendly, and even essential to the interests of civil liberty.

5. Religion, universally embraced, would avert the judgments of God, and secure, in the ordinary course of things, and by a particular blessing, an abundance of all the comforts of life. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish, the earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant." God is known, in every age, by the judgments he executeth. He is governor among the nations, and asserts his authority and rights, as such, by rebuking those who despise him. He commissions the sword to devour. He denies the requisite heat of the sun, and the vivifying rain of heaven. "Who can stand before his cold?" The expectations of the husbandman are disappointed. "The

children ask for bread, and their soul is poured out into their mother's bosom." By such dispensations God stretcheth out his hand, and smiteth a rebellious people. Over us his indignation has passed. New-England has not probably seen a more gloomy appearance on the face of nature for a century, than that which has excited alarm since this year commenced. The partial prevalence of religion in a measure reverses these melancholy scenes. What then would the universal prevalence of it produce? "Bring ye all the tithes into the store house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." It would produce peace, health, and plenty. It would give a propitious course to the seasons. It would spread fertility and beauty over the face of nature. These temporal blessings are confessedly great. Their value may be enhanced in our esteem, by the most cogent kind of instruction, distressing experience.

6. The universal acceptance and practice of religion would secure the wisest form and administration of civil government. "For forms of government," said Pope, "let fools contest! That which is best administered is best." This is partly wise, and partly foolish. Unquestionably very much indeed depends on the administration of government. But can there be no guards against maladministration, in the constitution or fundamental laws of a government? Be it so, that a government in theory despotic, as by a singularly merciful disposal of Providence, it may fall into the hands of a very benevolent and upright man, one of a thousand, is so managed as in the best manner to promote the happiness of the people; can we warrantably act upon the expectation of the frequent recurrence of such a disposal? Is any thing

more common in this world than the abuse of confidence and authority ? Then, should not, must not, a wise people, (and a religious, will be a wise people,) set up every possible guard, in the very texture of their government, against abuse in the administration of it ? But if the members of a community were universally religious, would they need such a guard ? In some measure they would. For virtuous men are preserved in their virtue by means.

Supposing a community, unawed by foreign power, deliberately to institute a constitution of government, as has been the fact in this country, a fact almost singular in the history of the world, arising partially, I dare not say wholly, from a religious influence; what would religion, acting universally, effect in regard to the administration of it ? We may safely say, that its administration would be very kind. It would certainly manifest economy in the public expenditures, equity in the apportionment of taxes, a careful management of revenue, a satisfaction with moderate salaries, impartiality in the decisions of courts, promptitude and fidelity in the discharge of every official duty, and liberal plans for secular improvement.

7. Religion thus embraced, would unite a community to God, by covenant bonds, and place it under his paternal and infallible protection. Such is the relation which the church actually sustains, and such is the protection which it enjoys. In this view, God is emphatically its glory. Allied by grace and promise on the one part, and love and subjection on the other, the Church is in the bosom of God, as his peculiar treasure. He keeps it as the apple of his eye. It cannot sink, for underneath are the everlasting arms. It cannot be diminished, it cannot fail of a perpetual increase, for the eu-

gement is, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." It cannot want either light or security. For God is both a sun and shield. While the nations who know not God are wasted by their follies and their crimes, as the effect of the wars they wage, and the indignation from above which they provoke, the Church proceeds, lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes. Let religion, then, pervade throughout a civil community, and it will become at once an integral portion of the Church, united to God by covenant bonds, and enjoying his protection. This protection would be the munition of rocks. It would be a better defence than the greatest number of ships of war, or veteran armies. It would banish all the solitudes which commonly grow out of the insecurity attached to human affairs.

Finally, such a universal influence of religion would make a civil state most useful in its influence upon the whole human family; especially, as it would act in subserviency to that kingdom, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. All its proceedings would be useful upon the broadest scale. Its power and its means would be employed, not to ravage and destroy, but to diffuse the knowledge of the Redeemer, to propagate the word of life, to send heralds of salvation to the ends of the earth. It would act on this benevolent scale with great effect. For effects are commonly proportionate to their causes. In the grand struggle for the universal emancipation of mankind from sin and the curse, it would move indeed, like an army with banners. A new phenomenon would appear in the moral world, admirably indicating the near approach of that eventful period, when a nation shall be born in a day.

Let us now collect into one general view what has been said upon this last, and leading part of my subject. Religion,

as taught and enjoined in our Bibles, believed in its principles, and obeyed in its precepts, would constitute the proper glory of a community, as it would extirpate and preclude all idolatry and false philosophy—it would produce a very thorough and most salutary reformation of morals—it would exclude party collisions, and extend a grateful reciprocity of affection and kindness among all classes of the people—it would banish ignorance and facilitate the progress of useful knowledge—it would avert the judgments of God, and secure, in the course of things, and by a particular blessing, an abundance of all the comforts of life—it would secure the wisest form, and the most beneficial administration of civil government—it would place the state under God's infallible protection; God would be in the midst of it, so that it could not be moved—and it would make the state most useful in its influence upon the whole human family, especially as it would act, by one impulse and a powerful concert, in the promotion of that kingdom, which is to survive all other kingdoms, and last forever.

These remarks will lead to a few useful conclusions.

1. To cherish the religion of the Bible, by a wise direction of legislative influence, is not only a sacred duty, but a dictate of the soundest policy. What is the end of legislation? Is it the aggrandizement of a few, or the highest benefit of the whole? The latter certainly. What is the end of a sound and vigorous policy? Is it to wheedle other nations into a coincidence with our plans, and to wrest from them their rights, or to advance a substantial, internal good? The latter surely. But ordinary expedients have hitherto failed.—Government, law, civilization, and science, however necessary, are found to be, in their best state, but partially productive of this end. In some cases they seem rather to minister to infidelity. After the labors and sufferings of a long series

of years, the dismal story still is "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and beheld the tears of such as are oppressed, and they had no comforter, and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter." Religion is the effectual relief. It is a remedy of easy application, and always at our command. It solicits our acceptance, and ever exceeds our largest interpretation of its promises. It is infallibly productive of the effect even upon the foolish hypothesis that the Bible originated in imposture. The most intelligent deists have been constrained to acknowledge its salutary efficacy, and have been forced to it to supply the great lack of other expedients. Our rock is better than theirs, our enemies themselves being judges. Let religion, then, be honored according to its most evident claims; and let not the suggestions of those misguided adversaries, those monstrously miscalculating politicians, who imagine that religion is a mere load upon the human intellect and upon civil society, be regarded a moment.

2. If religion, universally embraced, and holding its due authority over the hearts and lives of men, is the proper glory of a community, irreligion, which is its opposite, must be its deep dishonor and its bane. Thus we are told in the scripture, that while righteousness exalteth a nation, sin is the reproach of any people; and that when the wicked bear rule the people mourn. Facts, in the whole history of the world, and as they are perpetually presenting themselves to our view, are in perfect agreement with this testimony. Whether then those who are impious in their principles and vicious in their practice, are to be considered as faithfully attached to the community, and seeking its best prosperity, by a pure patriotism, judge ye.

3. If religion, embraced universally in its principles, and obeyed in its precepts, is the glory of a community, legislators and magistrates ought to be amiable examples of it.— This obligation devolves upon them, not only as men, as creatures of God, and pensioners on his bounty, under his law, and necessarily accountable to him; but by virtue of the rank they hold. “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass, springing out of the earth, by clear shining, after rain.” The name of one king of Israel is transmitted to us under the *dishonor* of having employed his authority and example to make Israel to sin. And under this infamy he must forever lie. The name of another is transmitted to us under the singular *honor* of being an efficient reformer in a time of extreme degeneracy. “Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizzards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah, and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law. And like unto him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him.” Indeed there cannot be too much of so excellent a thing. It was therefore peculiarly honorable to Josiah that he turned to the Lord *with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might*. The memory of the magistrate, who possesses his spirit, and imitates his examples, shall be blessed.

4. The subject is adapted to correct some prevalent, and very pernicious errors respecting glory, as an object of pur-

fruit. Glory, that glory which the scripture properly denominates vain glory, and of which it admonishes us not to be desirous; consisting, in personal elevation and fame; in national aggrandizement; in an extensive territory gained by conquests; in a successful commerce, though it be prosecuted in a disregard of the principles of equality and justice; in fleets and armies; in martial triumphs by sea and by land; in a dictating preeminence and celebrity; is a leading object with mankind. It is unhappily made estimable by opinions and maxims, which a correct understanding cannot justify. In dereliction of the wholesome instructions of God's word, which our forefathers respected with conscientious reverence, there has been a systematic effort, in our own country, to put the love of this glory into action as the grand stimulus to heroism. This glory is most expensively acquired, and, when possessed, is an unsubstantial enjoyment. It is destructive in proportion as it is fascinating. It is indeed a demon, under whose iron dominion, humanity sighs, and before whose altars, thousands of victims continually bleed. It is high time to denounce this image of jealousy, grind it to powder, and scatter its dust to the four winds. Let us see the detestable nature of vain glory, and prefer that more excellent way which is shown to us in the oracles of God.

5. The subject calls the benevolent to high congratulations, that the christian religion, is at this moment spreading in the world with unparalleled success, and that we have a sure word of prophecy, certifying us of its speedy universal triumph. It is a fact that the religion of the Gospel never had, since the days of the Apostles, so commanding an attitude as it now has. It is embraced by millions of sincere professors. Revivals, remarkably free from error and en-

thusiasm, are multiplied. Numerous societies have been formed, since the memorable epoch of the rise of the London missionary society—for the extension of the missionary interest—for the circulation of the scriptures—for the reformation of morals—for the spread of religious instruction by tracts—for the abolition of slavery—to give language to the dumb and hearing to the deaf—to relieve the needy, and to wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow. Recently powerful monarchs have united, in the form of a treaty, and by mutual pledges of fidelity, to promote, by a special care, christianity, in their respective dominions, and to make its holy precepts the rule of their policy. Thus, by a course of events entirely beyond expectation, and perpetually exciting surprise, the schemes of infidelity are defeated, and the Church advances, with speed, to her destined elevation.

Undoubtedly this work will go on. As it proceeds, great and glorious effects will be realized. The idols will be utterly abolished. Crimes will cease. Discord will yield to vows of amity. Knowledge will be extensively diffused.—Government will be mild and friendly to human happiness. Equal, and a chastened liberty, will succeed oppression. Peace, with her full horn, will force the bloody, ghastly, insatiate demon of war to the place where hell and horror reign. The tabernacle of God will be with men; he will dwell among them and be their God, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. In these assured prospects let us felicitate ourselves, and join the chorus of all benevolent dependent intelligents, and say, “Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

We meet this day upon a joyous occasion. It is a pleasing spectacle to behold the representatives of a free people, un-

awed by power, assembling to legislate for the public benefit. But the occasion is the more joyful, as it is, in the devotional forms of it, a recognition of the truth and claims of our religion. We are in the presence of the Majesty of heaven and earth. We owe our being and powers, our liberties and hopes, to his goodness. Every passage of our lives adds to the aggregate of motives to persuade us to devote ourselves most promptly and faithfully to his service. His service is a reasonable service. In keeping his commandments there is a great reward. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth in the heavens for our help, and in his excellency on the sky. Let us then come into his presence with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Let us be thankful unto him and bless his name.

HIS EXCELLENCY

Will be pleased to permit the preacher, as an organ of the community, on this occasion, to present a tribute of respect to him, and a cordial felicitation, in view of passing events. A pure conscience, and the unconstrained suffrage of an enlightened people, preclude the necessity of individual attestation to personal merit. The former is the best source of consolation. The latter is all the homage that a true patriot can covet. Your Excellency has the pleasure of possessing the executive authority of the state in a time of national repose. Enjoying, you cannot but duly appreciate, the blessings of tranquility. All the means of perpetuating them will undoubtedly be cherished by you with paternal care. Deeply must your mind be impressed with the truth, that civil magistrates are on a level with their constituents, as creatures of God, as under the obligations of his law, as dependent on his grace, as responsible to his bar. It is a maxim of infallible authority that, "He who walketh uprightly

walketh surely." Your Excellency's official course will be precisely this. May the duties which it involves, as they cannot be neglected, be made easy, by the consolations of religion, and the prompt co-operation of all your coadjutors in government. May your advancing years be full of piety and honor. And when it shall please the Sovereign of the world to terminate your labors here below, may you be admitted into the mansions of the blessed.

HIS HONOR

The Lieutenant Governor, the Members of the Honorable Council, and the Legislative Body, will allow us to express our congratulations on the occasions of this day, and our devout wishes, that their proceedings, in their legislative capacity, may be honorable to themselves, and contribute to raise the State to an eminence, worthy of it, as an integral part of the nation. It cannot be expected that one who has so recently become an inhabitant of the State, should enter minutely into its local and relative concerns. But it is obvious to say, that you are legislators of a Republic, Gentlemen, advancing in agricultural improvements, in population, in knowledge, and in regard to the infinitely superior interests of religion, and this is our common joy. Legislation, in such a community, must have nearly a uniform character. It can hardly fail to be directed by public spirit, and to consult the general weal.

I have insisted on a subject, Gentlemen, not new, but ever claiming the most serious regards. Multitudes there have been, of late years, and legislators have been found in their ranks, who have thought religion to be an imposition, and that it was time to discard it. But they rebel against evidence. Their wisdom is foolishness. Their doctrine leads directly to political suicide. Religion is as far as possible

from being an imposition. Instead of enchaining the human mind, by mystical dogmas, and a vain superstition, it vindicates it into a spiritual liberty. It enriches the mind with sublime conceptions, and fills it with celestial joys. I flatter myself that the remarks that have been made, have gone to strengthen a conviction, which you already possessed, on this subject. Let me ask you then, citizen legislators, to rise, in all the majesty of christian virtue, and, by such means as are at your command, give to religion its best possible effect. Unite with its ministers in this labor of wisdom, and give to its children your blessing. May your measures and your lives be such as reflection can approve ; and as those who are relatively and officially gods, must die like men ; may your exit from these abodes of infirmity and sin, be such as angels can behold with pleasure.

And let every individual of this assembly immediately, and cordially submit to Him, in whom the beauties of religion, have a full display, and who is exalted at the head of principalities and powers, that in all things, he might have the preeminence. To Him be glory and dominion forever.....
AMEN.

